

**ASSEMBLY OF THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC**

**EUROPEAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE**

**PART I - INTRODUCTION**

**Opinion**

**COM(2016)543**

**Proposal for a DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on a European Year of Cultural Heritage**

In accordance with Article 7(2) of Law No 43/2006 of 25 August 2006 on the monitoring, examination and issuing of opinions by the Assembly of the Portuguese Republic in the context of the process of European Union construction, as amended by Law No 21/2012 of 17 May 2012, and in accordance with the Guidelines for the Scrutiny of EU Initiatives approved on 8 January 2013, the Proposal for a DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on a European Year of Cultural Heritage [COM(2016) 543] was submitted to the European Affairs Committee.

In view of its subject-matter, the initiative was forwarded to the Committee on Culture, Communication, Youth and Sport, which analysed it and approved the Report annexed to this Opinion, of which it is an integral part.

## **PART II – RECITALS**

*‘In the Middle Ages, European unity rested on the common religion. In the Modern Era, religion yielded its position to culture (to cultural creation) which came to embody the supreme values by which Europeans recognised themselves, defined and identified themselves.’*

Milan Kundera

1. This initiative seeks to designate 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage. The aim of this is to promote and protect Europe’s cultural heritage. The following is acknowledged: i) the need to preserve European cultural heritage as a vital factor in promoting cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue; ii) the importance of culture as a catalyst for creativity, and stimulant for growth and employment through its direct and indirect economic potential<sup>1</sup>; iii) the importance of culture as a way of promoting greater social cohesion; iv) the contribution of cultural heritage to the international dimension of the European Union.

2. Nevertheless, it is important to point out that the contribution of cultural heritage to the many areas mentioned is not only not very well known but also undervalued. In addition to this, there are also numerous challenges facing this sector, namely: reduced public budgets of the various Member States, particularly those hit most severely by the crisis: declining participation in traditional cultural activities; ‘increasing environmental and physical pressures on heritage sites; transforming value chains and expectations as a result of the digital shift; and the illegal trafficking of cultural artefacts’.

3. In view of this, it is important to make 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage in order to notify, mobilise and raise awareness among Europeans and the Member States regarding

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<sup>1</sup> Over 300,000 people are directly employed in the European cultural heritage sector and 7.8 million European jobs are indirectly linked to cultural heritage, particularly in tourism and building works, ancillary services such as transport, interpretation services, maintenance and security. In France, for example, in 2011, cultural heritage generated EUR 8.1 billion from museums, visitor attractions, historical buildings and tourist attractions, as well as from libraries and archives.

the challenges and opportunities that the cultural sector represents and, simultaneously, make it possible to highlight the role of the European Union in promoting common solutions.

4. The European Year of Cultural Heritage will therefore represent an opportunity for all parties involved to work together to develop a more robust and integrated approach to cultural heritage, making it possible to promote and protect it and maximise its intrinsic and societal value.

5. We therefore consider that to safeguard our common heritage is to safeguard our collective memory and this means that we must assume common responsibilities. The initiative presented by the European Commission is therefore welcome.

6. Lastly it should be noted that the Report submitted and approved by the Committee on Culture, Communication, Youth and Sport fully reflects the content of the proposal. Accordingly, it must be reproduced in full in order to avoid repetition of analysis and consequent redundancy.

#### ***a) Legal basis***

The legal basis for this initiative is Article 167 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU). Article 167(1) TFEU gives the European Union the task of contributing 'to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore'. Union action is aimed at encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, supporting and supplementing their action in various areas, including improving the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples, and in the area of conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance (Article 167(2) TFEU).

#### ***b) Principle of subsidiarity***

As regards the principle of subsidiarity, it should be noted that, bearing in mind the aim of this Proposal for a Decision is to support the Member States' efforts to protect, safeguard, foster and promote European cultural heritage, and that this cannot be achieved by the Member States alone, given the scale of the action required, it would be better achieved at Union level, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty on European Union.

Therefore, and in the light of the foregoing, it is considered that this initiative complies with the principle of subsidiarity.

### **PART III - OPINION**

In the light of the information set out above and the report of the relevant committee, the European Affairs Committee's opinion is as follows:

1. This initiative upholds the principle of subsidiarity, insofar as the objective will be achieved more effectively by means of action at European Union level.
2. This concludes the scrutiny of this initiative.

Palácio de São Bento, 25 October 2016

Rapporteur                      President of the Committee

**(Francisca Parreira)**      **(Regina Bastos)**

(Signatures)

**PART IV - ANNEX**

Report from the Committee on Culture, Communication, Youth and Sport